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Pernille Baardseth

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BACON & THOMAS, PLLC

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EXAMINER

THAKUR, VIREN A

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/528,734	Applicant(s) BAARDSETH ET AL.	
	Examiner VIREN THAKUR	Art Unit 1794	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 January 2010.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 13-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 13-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Upon reconsideration, the rejection of claims 5-6 (i.e. new claims 13-14) and claim 6 (i.e. new claim 14-15) have been withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. **Claims 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kaaber (“Potato Research”) as evidenced by “Health Canada,” Grivas et al. (“Acrylamide in Food”) and Afssa (“Acrylamide: Information Point”) and as further evidenced by the definition of "chopping."**

Regarding claim 13, Kaaber teaches slicing potatoes and fermenting the potatoes with lactic acid bacteria, for the purpose of lowering the reducing sugar content. Regarding the limitation of “chopping” it is noted that the dictionary definition indicates that chopping is to “mince, dice or cut into small pieces.” In this case, by slicing the potato into a size less than the original size, Kaaber encompasses the limitation of “chopping” the potato. After reducing the size of the whole potato, Kaaber

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discloses frying in palm oil (see page 40, Materials and Methods). It is noted that since Kaaber teaches the particular claimed step of employing lactic acid bacteria fermentation for consuming reducing sugars, which are the steps that applicants' also perform for achieving the reduced acrylamide when cooking, that Kaaber would also inherently have achieved the claimed result of reduced acrylamide formation. In any case, "Health Canada" has been relied on as evidence that the reaction of asparagine with a reducing sugar, such as glucose results in the production of acrylamide when carried out at high temperatures. Grivas et al. further evidences this concept by indicating that acrylamide is formed during the Maillard reaction, between amino acids and reducing sugars (see page 7, paragraph A; page 8, "Formation of Acrylamide through..."; page 13, "Inhibition of the Maillard reaction" and "Maillard reactions and food processing"; page 17, first paragraph). Affsa also teaches that the Maillard reaction is the reaction that results in the formation of acrylamide (see page 6, "Hypothesis concerning the formation of Acrylamide"). Thus, applicants' were not the first to recognize that the reaction between an amino acid, such as asparagine and reducing sugars, such as glucose would result in the formation of acrylamide when thermally processing those foods. Thus, removal of the reducing sugars would thus have resulted in the elimination of one of the reactants (with asparagine being the other) and therefore, by removing one of the reactants, Kaaber would intrinsically have resulted in reduced acrylamide formation.

It is noted that the claim only recites the steps of chopping, fermenting and frying the chopped potatoes. The limitation of "optionally loading the resulting part-cooked

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French fried potatoes into a container” is not a positive method step since it is optional, and thus is not required. Therefore, this limitation has not been given patentable weight. Regarding the recitation in the claim of “subsequent cooking of part cooked French fried potatoes” it is noted that this recitation is also not a positive method step. The cooking of the part cooked French fried potatoes, as recited, is not a positive method step and thus is not given patentable weight. Regarding the limitation “French fried potatoes” it is noted that the claim does not recite any method step of forming the potatoes into the shape of French fries or cutting the potatoes into French fry type shapes, for example. The claim thus only recites frying chopped fermented potatoes and thus reads on frying any type of fermented potato product that has been reduced in size. Furthermore, it is noted that the preamble of the claim recites “a method for reducing acrylamide production in subsequent cooking of part cooked French fried potatoes.” Thus, the preamble recites that the particular acrylamide reduction is the result of the particular claimed step of fermentation using lactic acid bacteria. The claim does not positively recite any step which results in reduced acrylamide formation but rather, recites steps, which when performed, would result in reduced acrylamide formation when cooking. Thus, Kaaber anticipates claim 13, as recited.

Regarding claim 14, it is noted that the only difference between claim 13 and 14 is that claim 14 treats the chopped potatoes with a physiologically acceptable acid. It is noted that the claim does not recite when the acid has been incorporated with the potatoes, and as such, since Kaaber discloses employing lactic acid producing bacteria, Kaaber thus inherently teaches treating the potatoes with lactic acid (since the bacteria

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consume the sugar in the potatoes and product lactic acid). The claim further does not limit the particular form of the acid (i.e. solid, liquid), nor the amount. Thus, Kaaber anticipated claim 14, as recited.

4. Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Lozano et al. (ES 2019044) and as further evidenced by the definition of "chopping," Beck (US 5389389), Erway (US 5750165) and Grivas et al. ("Acrylamide in Food") and Afssa ("Acrylamide: Information Point").

Lozano et al. discloses treating sliced potatoes with citric acid or even phosphoric acid (see page 2, 7th paragraph, and page 3 "phosphoric acid") for the purpose of improving uniformity of the fried potatoes by controlling and preventing an increase in the reducing sugars (see page 2, 2nd to 3rd paragraph). Regarding the limitation of "chopping" it is noted that the dictionary definition indicates that chopping is to "mince, dice or cut into small pieces." In this case, by slicing the potato into a size less than the original size, Lozano et al. encompass the limitation of "chopping" the potato. Although Lozano et al. is silent as to the reduction of acrylamide, as discussed above with respect to claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), the particular reduction in acrylamide occurs as a result of this treatment step (as claimed). It is noted that the claim does not recite a positive step for the reduction in acrylamide, but rather indicates that subsequent (i.e. when) cooking partly cooked French fried potatoes, a reduction in acrylamide results. The process, however, is simply an acid treatment, which Lozano et al. also discloses. In any case, Beck further evidences that acid treatment of potato

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products results in reduced non-enzymatic browning (i.e. the Maillard reaction) (see column 5, lines 33-55 and column 9, lines 36-49)), which Grivas et al. and Afssa evidence that the Maillard reaction can be the pathway for acrylamide formation. Erway also evidences treating potatoes that have been reduced in size with an acid, for the purpose of reducing the Maillard reaction (see column 5, lines 60-64; column 6, lines 7-20). Thus, claim 14 is anticipated by Lozano et al.

5. Claims 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by El-Hag et al. (US 4317842).

It is noted that claims 16 and 17 are product by process claims and thus are only limited by the particular product recited in the claim (see MPEP 2113). In this case, the product is French fries. Since El-Hag et al. discloses French fries, claims 16 and 17 are anticipated by El-Hag et al.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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7. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

8. Claims 13-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaaber ("Potato Research") in view of El-Hag et al. (US 4317842) and Shanbhag et al. (US 5000970) and in further view of Health Canada, "Grivas et al. ("Acrylamide in Food"), Afssa ("Acrylamide: Information Point") and Soe (US 20020114864).

Regarding claims 13 and 14, Kaaber has been applied as discussed above under 35 U.S.C. 102(b). Regarding chopping, Kaaber recites slicing, which was construed to read on chopping. In any case, to expedite prosecution, El-Hag and Shanbhag et al. have been relied on to teach chopping into shapes such as those of potato sticks - commonly referred to as French fries. Regarding the particular type of slice, in view of El-Hag et al. who teach that the potatoes can be reduced in size into cubes, slices, ribbons or potato strips (see column 3, lines 27-30), and Shanbhag et al. who teach strips, to thus modify Kaaber and employ French fry slices (i.e. strips) would thus have been an obvious matter of choice and/or design.

Regarding the acrylamide reduction, it is noted that this is the intended result of the particular claimed steps *especially* in view of the recitation that the method (i.e.

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lactic acid fermentation) is “for reducing acrylamide production in subsequent cooking.” Therefore, since Kaaber teaches the particular claimed step of employing lactic acid bacteria fermentation for consuming reducing sugars, which is the step that applicants’ also performs for achieving the reduced acrylamide when cooking, then Kaaber would also have achieved the claimed result of reduced acrylamide formation. In any case, “Health Canada” teaches that the reaction of asparagine with a reducing sugar, such as glucose results in the production of acrylamide when carried out at high temperatures. Grivas et al. further evidences this concept by indicating that acrylamide is formed during the Maillard reaction, between amino acids and reducing sugars (see page 7, paragraph A; page 8, “Formation of Acrylamide through...”; page 13, “Inhibition of the Maillard reaction” and “Maillard reactions and food processing”; page 17, first paragraph). Affsa also teaches that the Maillard reaction can be the reaction that results in the formation of acrylamide (see page 6, “Hypothesis concerning the formation of Acrylamide”). Soe also teaches that the Maillard reaction, which Grivas et al. and Affsa evidence results in the formation of acrylamide, can be prevented by breaking down the reducing sugar (see at least, the abstract). Thus, applicants’ were not the first to recognize that the reaction between an amino acid, such as asparagine and reducing sugars, such as glucose would result in the formation of acrylamide when thermally processing those foods.

Once the particular reactants have been recognized in the acrylamide formation reaction, to thus reduce one of the reactants, such as asparagine or the other reactant, such as the sugar would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, for

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the purpose reducing the formation of acrylamide. Nevertheless, it is noted that Kaaber already teaches the step of employing fermentation for the purpose of consuming the reducing sugars in potatoes. As a result, Kaaber teaches that lactic acid fermentation can be used to remove the reducing sugars that accumulate in potatoes. On Table 1, Kaber teaches that after a particular fermentation period, the reducing sugar content of a variety of potatoes was reduced to zero. In view of the art taken as a whole, to thus ferment potatoes using lactic acid bacteria, would thus have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, for the purpose of reducing the formation of acrylamide.

Regarding the part-cooked French fried potatoes, it is noted that there is no positive recitation of partially cooking French fried potatoes. In any case, in an effort to expedite prosecution, El-Hag, et al. has been relied on to teach that it has been conventional to par-fry (i.e. partially cook in oil) potato strips (i.e. French fries) or potato slices and then store French fries, which can be subsequently finished in hot oil or in an oven (see column 1, lines 17-22; column 3, line 20 to column 4, line 3) and then is packaged (see example 4). El-Hag et al. thus teaches that this results in a packaged par-fried potato product which can subsequently be prepared at a consumer's home, while still having the flavor and texture of a conventional deep-fried potato product. El-Hag et al. also thus teach that the freezing and packaging facilitate improved storage and preservation. Although El-Hag et al. appears silent as to the particular type of packaging, to thus employ a container or any other conventional packaging would have been an obvious matter of choice and/or design. In any case, Shanbhag et al. teaches packaging par-fried potato strips into airtight packaging such as containers (column 8,

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lines 42-47). Thus, to employ conventional air tight containers for the purpose of ensuring extended storage life would thus have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art. Nevertheless, since El-Hag et al. teaches that the par-fried product can be either of strips or slices, this is similar to Kaaber who teaches slices of potato that are fried. To thus par-fry the potatoes of Kaaber and thus allow for subsequent oven baking would thus have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, for the purpose of extending the shelf life, while also allowing a consumer to be able to easily make the fried potato products at home in an oven, which still have improved texture and taste.

Regarding claim 15, Kaaber teaches producing fried potato slices by frying chopped potatoes pre-treated with lactic acid producing bacterium.

Claim 15 differs from Kaaber in reciting a container containing "oven-ready French fried potatoes." By reciting oven-ready, the claim could imply that the French fried potatoes could be capable of another cooking step, such as placing in an oven. It is noted however, that the claim is not specific as to what would have been this cooking step. If applicant chooses to file a reply to this Office Action, it is noted that reciting that the container contains partially cooked French fried potatoes that are finish cooked in an oven would remove the above ambiguity regarding oven ready.

El-Hag et al. has been relied on as discussed immediately above. To thus par-fry the potatoes of Kaaber and thus allow for subsequent oven baking would thus have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, for the purpose of extending the

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shelf life, while also allowing a consumer to be able to easily make the fried potato products at home in an oven, which still have improved texture and taste.

Regarding the particular type of slice, in view of El-Hag et al. who teach that the potatoes can be reduced in size into cubes, slices, ribbons or potato strips (see column 3, lines 27-30), to thus modify Kaaber and employ French fry slices (i.e. strips) would thus have been an obvious matter of choice and/or design.

Regarding claims 16 and 17, the combination, as applied to claim 15 teaches producing French fries by slicing potatoes, fermenting with a lactic acid bacteria and frying. It is noted that claim 16 is a product by process claim and as such, the claim is directed to the product and not the process by which the product is made. In this case, the product is French fries. The references as applied to claim 15 teach lactic acid bacteria fermented sliced potatoes (which would thus also release lactic acid and thus treat the potatoes with lactic acid), and further teach that to use French fries or any other type of sliced potato product would have been an obvious matter of choice and/or design. Thus, the combination teaches the product as recited in claim 16.

Regarding claim 18, the combination as applied to claim 15 teaches a sealed container.

Regarding claims 19 and 20, which recite that the amount of acrylamide was reduced by 38%, it is noted that since the combination teaches the same treatment steps as those recited in the claims, that the particular reduction in acrylamide would also have been intrinsic in the prior art.

9. Claim 14, 17 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lozano et al. (ES 2019044) in view of El-Hag et al. (US 4317842) in view of Beck (US 5389389), Health Canada, "Grivas et al. ("Acrylamide in Food"), Afssa ("Acrylamide: Information Point") and Erway (US 5750165)

Regarding chopping, Lozano et al. recites slicing, which has been construed to read on chopping. In any case, to expedite prosecution, El-Hag has been relied on to teach chopping into shapes such as those of potato sticks - commonly referred to as French fries. Lozano et al. teaches treating sliced potatoes with citric acid or even phosphoric acid (see page 2, 7th paragraph, and page 3 "phosphoric acid") for the purpose of improving uniformity of the fried potatoes by controlling and preventing an increase in the reducing sugars (see page 2, 2nd to 3rd paragraph). Although Lozano et al. is silent as to the reduction of acrylamide, as discussed above with respect to claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), the particular reduction in acrylamide occurs as a result of this treatment step (as claimed). It is noted that the claim does not recite a positive step for the reduction in acrylamide, but rather indicates that subsequent (i.e. when) cooking partly cooked French fried potatoes, a reduction in acrylamide results. The process, however, is simply an acid treatment, which Lozano et al. also discloses. In any case, Beck and Erway have been relied on as discussed above in paragraph 6 to teach reducing the Maillard reaction by treating potatoes with an acid. Health Canada, Grivas et al. and Afssa have been relied on, as discussed above, to teach that there is a link between the Maillard reaction and the formation of acrylamide. This teaches that reducing the Maillard reaction would also have reduced the formation of acrylamide.

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Thus, by treating the sliced potatoes with a food grade acid, Lozano et al. would intrinsically have reduced the formation of acrylamide, when the product was thermally processed. Regarding the particular type of slice, in view of El-Hag et al. who teach that the potatoes can be reduced in size into cubes, slices, ribbons or potato strips (see column 3, lines 27-30), to thus modify Lozano et al. and employ French fry slices (i.e. strips) would thus have been an obvious matter of choice and/or design.

Regarding the limitation of part-cooked French fried potatoes, in an effort to expedite prosecution, El-Hag et al. teaches chopping potatoes into strips, such as French fry shaped potatoes, which are subsequently par-fried (i.e. fried) and then packaged, thus resulting in an extended shelf-life potato product which can be subsequently cooked at home by the consumer while still having the desired French fry taste and texture, as discussed above in paragraph 8. To thus par-fry the potatoes of Lozano et al. and thus allow for subsequent oven baking would thus have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, for the purpose of extending the shelf life, while also allowing a consumer to be able to easily make the fried potato products at home in an oven, which still have improved texture and taste.

Regarding claim 17, combination, as applied to claim 14 teaches producing French fries by slicing potatoes, treating with an acid and frying. It is noted that claim 17 is a product by process claim and as such, the claim is directed to the product and not the process by which the product is made. In this case, the product is French fries. The references as applied to claim 14 teach acid treated sliced and further teach that to use French fries or any other type of sliced potato product would have been an obvious

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matter of choice and/or design. Thus, the combination teaches the product as recited in claim 17.

Regarding claim 20, which recites that the amount of acrylamide was reduced by 38%, it is noted that since the combination teaches the same treatment steps as those recited in the claims, that the particular reduction in acrylamide would also have been intrinsic in the prior art.

Response to Arguments

10. On page 6 of the response, applicants urge that Kaaber does not produce French Fries and also does not disclose “part-cooking” and thus no production of any “part-cooked” product has been disclosed in the reference. Thus, applicants urge that the claims are not anticipated.

As discussed in the rejection above under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), claims 13 and 14 do not positively recite any part-cooking step, nor do the claims recite a step for making French fry type potato products. That is, there is no link between the step of “chopping potatoes” and that of forming the potatoes into a French fry type shape. Also, there is no link between “frying the fermented chopped potatoes” and the frying being a partial cooking. Thus, the rejection of claims 13 and 14 are still anticipated by the references. It is noted that applicants’ specification even indicates that French fries can be made from sliced potatoes.

11. Applicants urge on page 7 of the response that the rejection does not mention French fries, acrylamide or a reduction in acrylamide formation. This urging has been considered but is moot in view of the new grounds of rejection, above. In any case, it is noted that once the art recognized removing a component of the reaction that would form acrylamide and since the art recognized reducing sugars as one of those components, the particular result of acrylamide reduction would have been intrinsic to the process of Kaaber, when the fermented products were thermally processed. Although Kaaber does not specifically disclose French fries, it is noted that once the art recognized removing reducing sugars by employing lactic acid bacteria fermentation, the particular conventional type of potato product that one chose to ferment would thus have been an obvious matter of choice and/or design.

12. On page 9 of the response, applicants urge that although references such as Zyzak disclose that the acrylamide formation results from the reaction of asparagine and reducing sugars, that this does not suggest that the levels of reducing sugars might be altered to provide a solution to this problem. Thus, applicants urge that it is only with hindsight knowledge that the examiner rejected the claims in view of the specified references.

This argument has been considered but is not persuasive. It is noted that Kaaber already teaches the critical step of lactic acid fermentation of reducing sugar containing foods, for the purpose of lowering the reducing sugar content. Whether it

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was recognized or not, the removal of the reducing sugars would intrinsically have resulted in the reduced formation of acrylamide when thermally processing the potatoes, especially in view of the reference to "Health Canada" which teaches that the reaction of asparagine with reducing sugars results in the formation of acrylamide. Thus, if one of these reactants was not present, the tendency for acrylamide to be formed would also have been reduced.

13. Regarding the request for an interview, it is noted that in view of the prima facie case of obviousness, an interview would be premature until a review of cited references and this Office Action.

Conclusion

14. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Tareke et al. ("Analysis of Acrylamide, a Carcinogen Formed in Heated Foodstuffs"), disclose that the formation of acrylamide resembles the Maillard reaction (page 5004, right column, lines 7-8). Talburt & Smith disclose treatment of sliced potatoes with acids. Baldwin discloses that lactic acid bacteria can prevent the Maillard reaction from proceeding. US 6599547 discloses that the Maillard reaction between amino acids and reducing sugars is a non-enzymatic browning reaction (column 24, lines 25-45).

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to VIREN THAKUR whose telephone number is (571)272-6694. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:00 am - 4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Rena Dye can be reached on (571)-272-3186. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Steve Weinstein/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1794

/V. T./
Examiner, Art Unit 1794